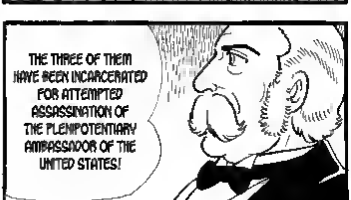
CHAPTER 31: IMPLICATED

SIGN. RESIDENCE OF THE AMERICAN DELEGATION



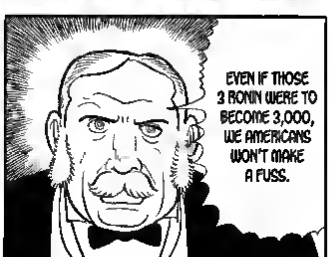
THAT IS TO SAY, THOSE MEN WERE SOMEONE'S PAID ASSASSINS, ISN'T THAT SO?
ASSASSINATION?
THE REPORT OF HYOE OKADA, KARO OF THE MITO HAN, GOES UP TO HERE.
THAT ISN'T WRITTEN HERE.

..WITHOUT A LORD TO SERVE. THEY'RE TROUBLEMAKERS WHO DEVOTE THEMSELVES TO CAUSING MAYHEM

...THOSE THREE WERE ALL RONIN, IN OTHER WORDS SECOND OR THIRD SONS, ABANDONED BY THEIR OWN FATHERS ..
MR HARRIS ...

WHAT CHILDISH THREATS!
BECAUSE OF ALL THIS, WE ALREADY TOLD YOU THAT THE MERE FACT THAT FOREIGNERS ARE LIVING IN EDO WON'T RESULT IN ANYTHING GOOD.
IT'S BETTER FOR YOU TO TAKE UP RESIDENCE IN KAWASAKI OR KANAGAWA.

WE AREN'T USED TO YOU FOREIGNERS YOU'LL ONLY MANAGE TO SOW HATRED!
JAPAN HAS REMAINED CLOSED TO THE WORLD FOR MANY YEARS.


EVEN IF THOSE 3 RONIN WERE TO BECOME 3,000, WE AMERICANS WON'T MAKE A FUSS.

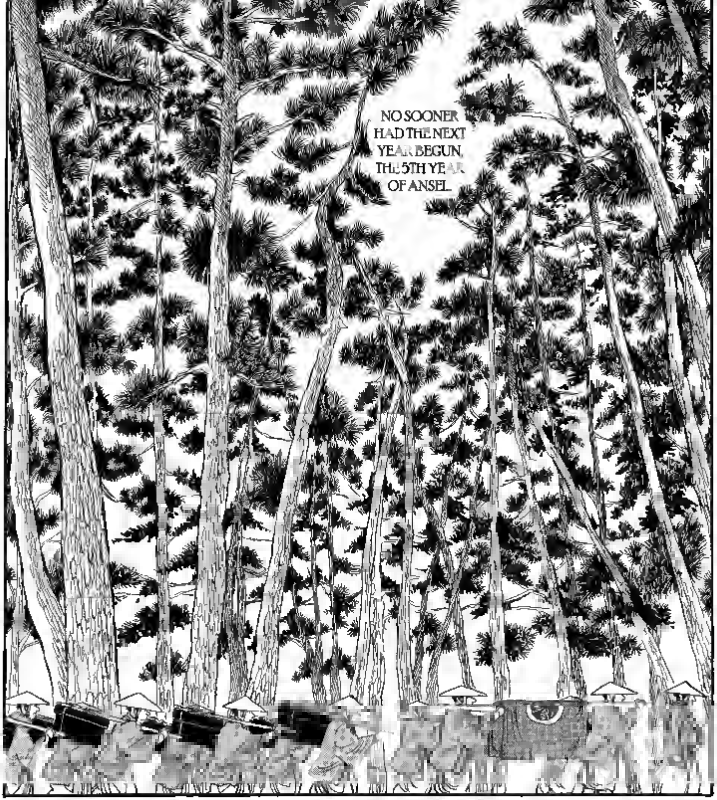
※会所交易　役人がなかだちをして日本と外国の商人が特定の場所で商取引すること。

WE MUST WRITE THE LETTERS AND WAIT FOR THEIR REPLIES. MOREOVER, ONE OF THE SHOGUN'S RELATIVES RESIDES IN DISTANT KYUSHU...
TO SIGN THE TREATY WE'LL NEED THE APPROVAL OF ALL THE DAIMYO IN THE COUNTRY.
...THE NEGOTIATIONS ARE OVER. WE'LL RETURN TO SHIMODA!!
IF YOU'RE GOING TO DRAG OUT THIS BLATHER INDEFINITELY...
ENOUGH ALREADY!! MORE THAN 20 DAYS HAVE PASSED SINCE I INTERVIEWED WITH THE SHOGUN!
TOMORROW IS CHRISTMAS, LORD INOUE
MR. HARRIS, IN MY COUNTRY WE CAN'T DECIDE UPON ANYTHING UNLESS IT'S AFTER A LONG DEBATE...
フゥ
SFX: OOF OOF
THE DAY OF OUR LORD'S BIRTH. FOR THAT REASON WE'LL TAKE OUR REPOSE.
I EXPECT YOUR RESPONSE THE DAY AFTER TOMO-RROW
C... C... CHRISTMAS?

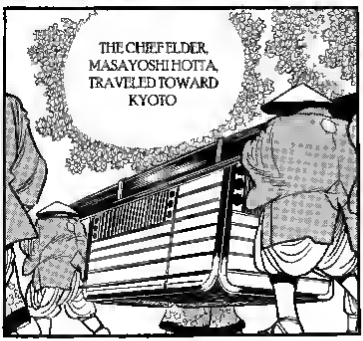
WHAT DOES THAT MEAN, HEUS?
IT'S OUR CHRISTIAN GREETING ON THIS HOLIDAY
MERRY CHRISTMAS TO YOU
I CAN'T ACCEPT THIS!
THIS IS GIFT OF CIGARETTES FOR YOU. I'M GIVING IT TO YOU, MANJIRO.
YOU TRY CIGARETTE.
NO, NO. HA, HA, HA, HA. YOU DON'T USE A PIPE. YOU TAKE THE CIGARETTE AND SMOKE IT. DIRECT TRY.
HA, HA, HA, HA. YOU'RE SUCH A CHARACTER
SFX PFFT PFFT

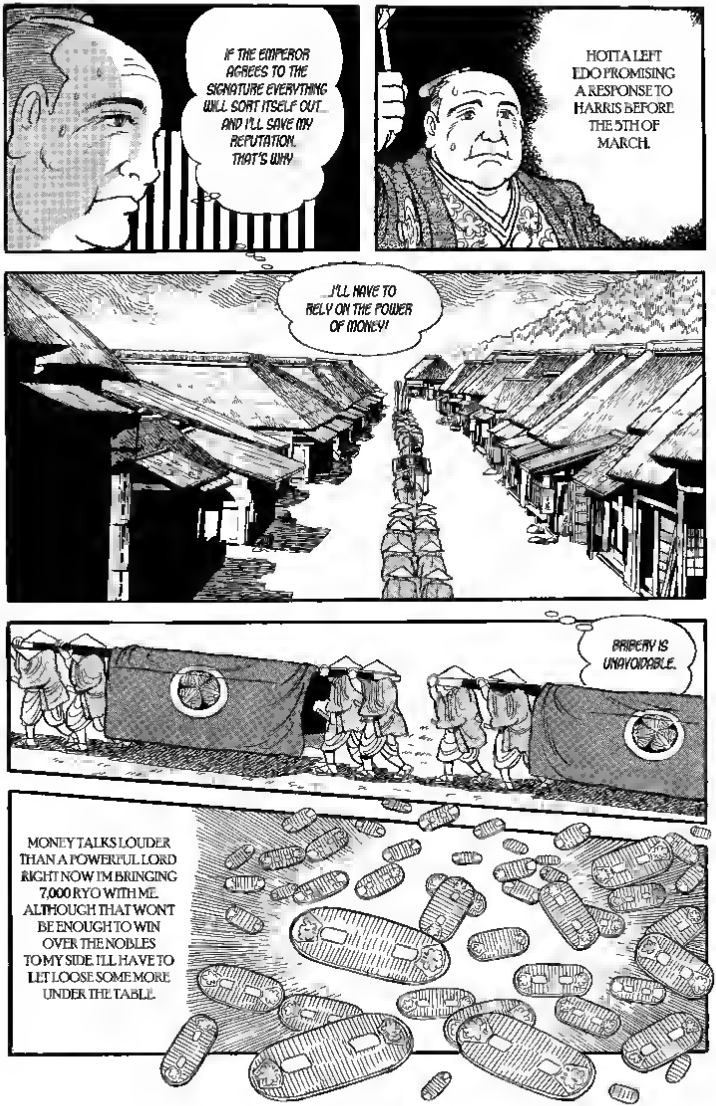
THERE ARE DIFFERENCES IN LANGUAGE, OF COURSE... BUT YOU JAPANESE ARE JUST COMPLETELY INSCRUTABLE. EVEN THE CHINESE ARE MORE READILY UNDERSTOOD.
MANJIRO, WHY DON'T THE JAPANESE OFFICIALS UNDERSTAND THINGS?
FROM MY POINT OF VIEW, IT'S YOU AMERICANS THAT DON'T UNDERSTAND ANYTHING.
WHAT DID YOU SAY?
NOTHING, I'M JUST THINKING ALOUD.
SFX PFFT PFFT
TODAY INOUE SAYS THAT THREE RONIN TRIED TO KILL US.
IS THAT TRUE?
YES, IT IS. I CAUGHT THEM MYSELF.
THEY TRIED TO ASSASSINATE THE CONSUL WITH A POISONED DART. YOU REMEMBER HOW THE HORSE REARED UP, RIGHT?
OH, NO.

I DON'T MIND DYING FOR A WOMAN I CARE FOR, BUT I'LL PASS ON DYING FOR NOTHING
YOU THINK THE RONIN'LL KILL US?
PERHAPS.
SO THE LIFE OF HIS EXCELLENCY REALLY IS IN DANGER. WE MUST BE CAREFUL.
RIGHT NOW, I DON'T HAVE A WOMAN I LOVE!
DYING FOR A WOMAN? HOW ABSURD. THIS IS THE MOST SMALL-MINDED IDEA OF THE CURLY-HAIRED
NOW STOP THAT, HEUS. FORGET ABOUT THE WOMEN HERE.
TOMORROW'S CHRISTMAS, THERE'S NO MORE CHOICE. I'LL LOVE A HORSE, FOR INSTANCE.
I KNOW, MANJIRO

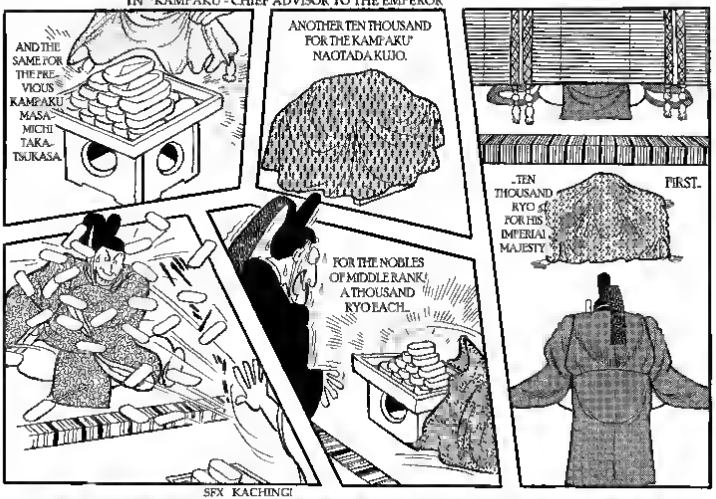

NO SOONER HAD THE NEXT YEAR BEGUN, THE 5TH YEAR OF ANSEI,

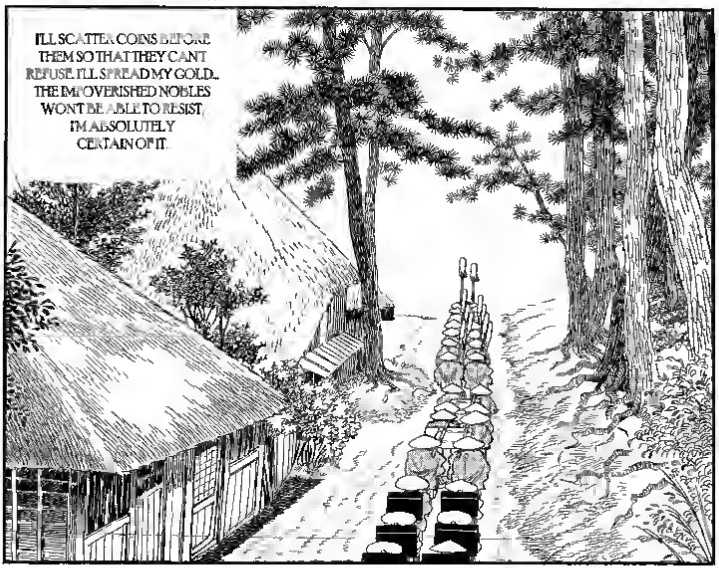
HE WAS PLANNING TO UNIFY THE DIVERGENT STANCES OF THE DAIMYO TOWARD THE HARRIS TREATY THANKS TO THE INTERVENTION OF THE IMPERIAL COURT

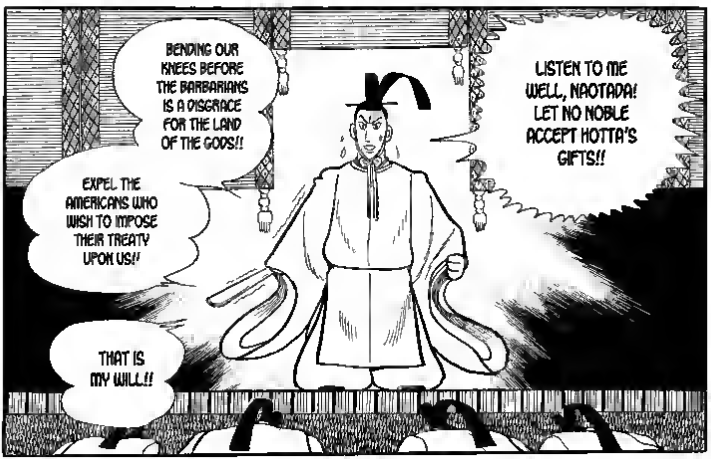

THE CHIEF ELDER, MASAYOSHI HOTTA, TRAVELED TOWARD KYOTO


IF THE EMPEROR AGREES TO THE SIGNATURE EVERYTHING WILL SORT ITSELF OUT... AND I'LL SAVE MY REPUTATION. THAT'S WHY.
HOTTA LEFT EDO PROMISING A RESPONSE TO HARRIS BEFORE THE 5TH OF MARCH.
...I'LL HAVE TO RELY ON THE POWER OF MONEY!
BRIBERY IS UNAVOIDABLE.
MONEY TALKS LOUDER THAN A POWERFUL LORD RIGHT NOW I'M BRINGING 7,000 RYO WITH ME. ALTHOUGH THAT WON'T BE ENOUGH TO WIN OVER THE NOBLES TO MY SIDE, I'LL HAVE TO LET LOOSE SOME MORE UNDER THE TABLE.

TN: *KAMPAKU - CHIEF ADVISOR TO THE EMPEROR



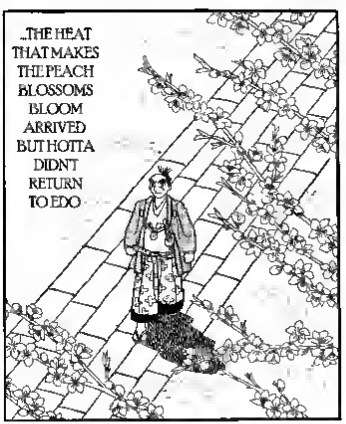




TN *JOI THE "EXPEL THE BARBARIANS" HALF OF SONNO JOI

THE PLUM
BLOSSOMS
OPENED..

THEN,
IN APRIL

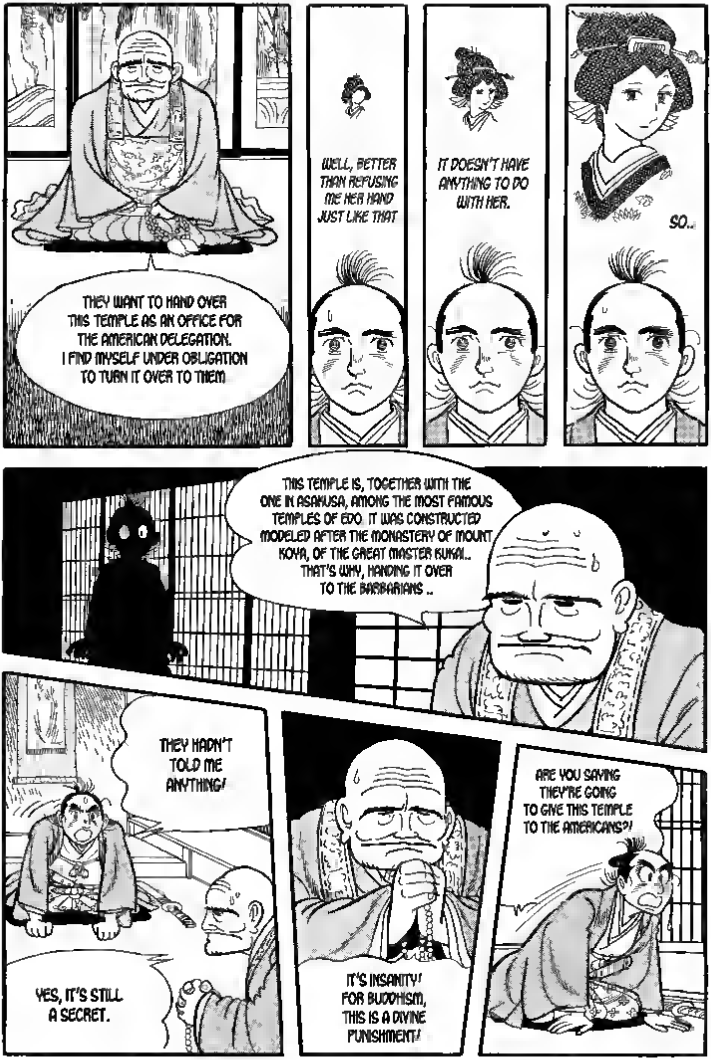

..THE HEAT
THAT MAKES
THE PEACH
BLOSSOMS
BLOOM
ARRIVED
BUT HOTTA
DIDN'T
RETURN
TO EDO

EAST PAVILION OF THE ZENFUKU TEMPLE, IN MOTO-AZABU
HELLO...
WITH YOUR PERMISSION!
I'M MANJIRO IBUYA, FROM THE AMERICAN DELEGATION.
WHAT'S YOUR BUSI-NESS?
WELCOME. PLEASE, COME IN.
THE ABBOT TANKAI, OF THE EAST PAVILION, HAS SUMMONED ME.

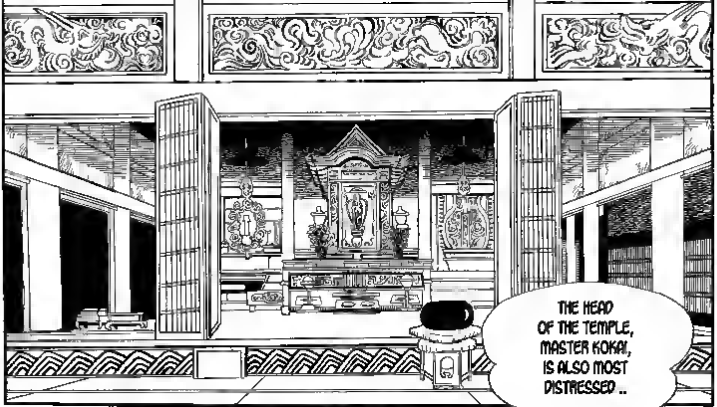
SFX TAP TAP TAP
SFX HMM HMM
COUGH...
MISS O-SEKI...
MR. MANJIRO, IT'S BEEN SOME TIME...

WHAT'S IT ABOUT? WHAT'S THE MATTER?
BY THE WAY, YOUR FATHER HAD ME CALLED HERE ALL OF A SUDDEN
MY UNDERSTANDING IS THAT YOUR WORK IS VERY HARD.
I... I... IT'S ALREADY BEEN MANY MONTHS SINCE I LAST SAW YOU I WAS SO BUSY WITH MY DUTIES...
AT ANY RATE, IT MUST BE SOMETHING IMPORTANT.
.....
DON'T TELL ME THAT IT'S FOR YOU?
D...DON'T TELL ME THAT IT'S... ABOUT...
I'M TANKAI, ABBOT OF THE EAST PAVILION OF THE ZENFUKU TEMPLE.
I'LL DO ANYTHING FOR YOU ANYTHING...
WHATEVER IT MAY BE, MY HEART WON'T BE SHAKEN!

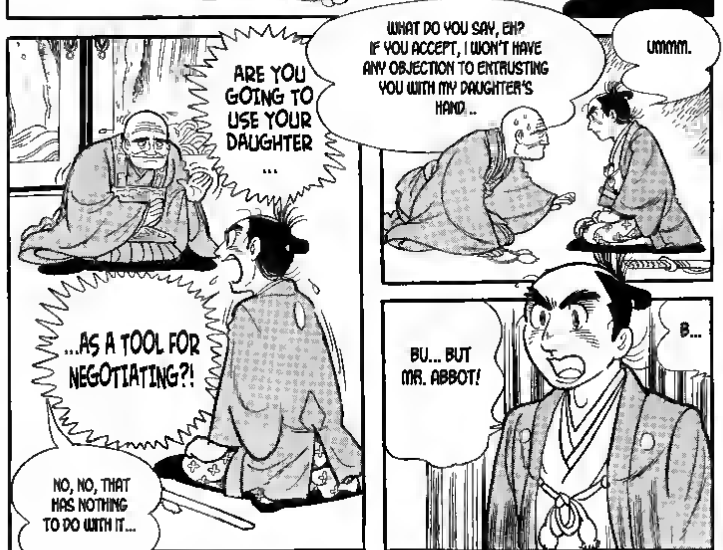
I'M MANJIRO IBUYA, IT'S A PLEASURE.
YES.
LEAVE US, O-SEKI.
I CAN SAY NOTHING IN DEFENSE OF HAVING YOU SUMMONED WHILE YOU'RE SO BUSY. YOU HAVE MY SINCEREST GRATITUDE FOR COMING
WELL, MR. IBUYA...
DOES HE FINALLY WANT TO SPEAK TO ME ABOUT MISS O-SEKI?
...BE ABOUT?
WHAT COULD THIS...
...A SECRET PETITION FROM THE SHOGUN CAME TO THIS HUMBLE TEMPLE.
...OUT OF THE BLUE...
YOU SEE, THE TRUTH IS...


THEY WANT TO HAND OVER THIS TEMPLE AS AN OFFICE FOR THE AMERICAN DELEGATION. I FIND MYSELF UNDER OBLIGATION TO TURN IT OVER TO THEM
WELL, BETTER THAN REFUSING ME HER HAND JUST LIKE THAT
IT DOESN'T HAVE ANYTHING TO DO WITH HER.
SO..
THIS TEMPLE IS, TOGETHER WITH THE ONE IN ASAKUSA, AMONG THE MOST FAMOUS TEMPLES OF EDO. IT WAS CONSTRUCTED MODELED AFTER THE MONASTERY OF MOUNT KOYA, OF THE GREAT MASTER KUKAI.. THAT'S WHY, HANDING IT OVER TO THE BARBARIANS ..
THEY HADN'T TOLD ME ANYTHING!
YES, IT'S STILL A SECRET.
IT'S INSANITY! FOR BUDDHISM, THIS IS A DIVINE PUNISHMENT!
ARE YOU SAYING THEY'RE GOING TO GIVE THIS TEMPLE TO THE AMERICANS?!

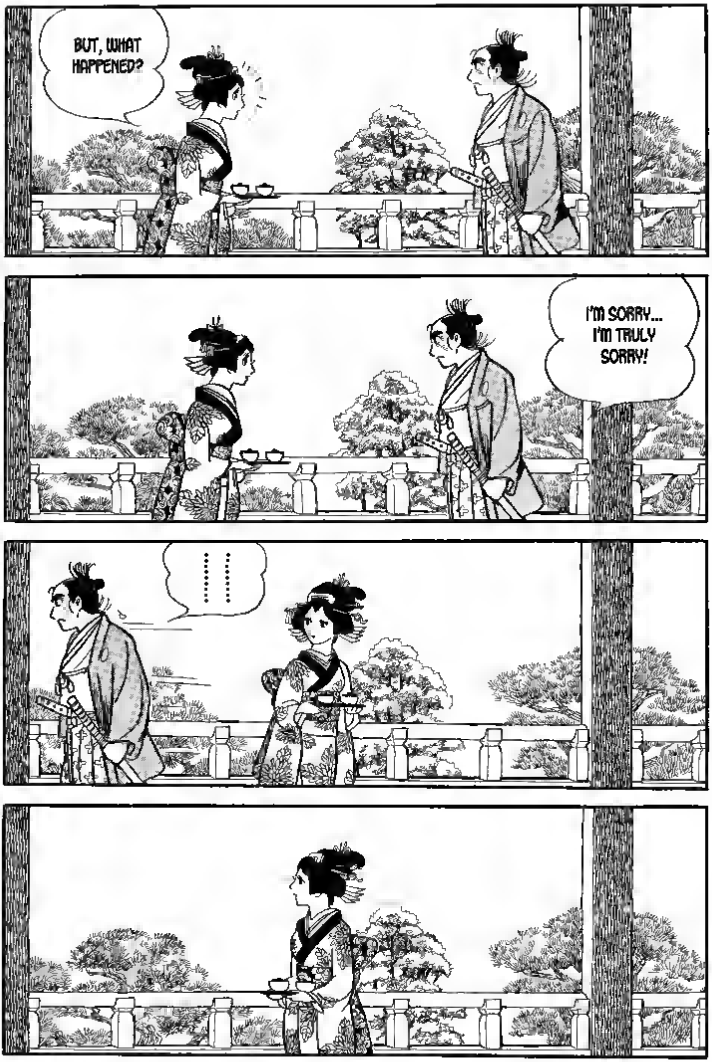
I HAD NO IDEA..
SO HE'S GOING TO STAY IN EDO, AND WHAT'S MORE, IN THIS VERY TEMPLE...
I THOUGHT THAT AFTER THE NEGOTIATIONS, HARRIS WOULD RETURN TO SHIMODA!
TO REFRAIN FROM USING THE TEMPLE...
PERSUADE THEM OF WHAT?
THAT'S WHY I'D LIKE TO ASK YOU TO SPEAK WITH THE AMERICANS AND PERSUADE THEM
IT'S MY UNDERSTANDING THAT YOU GET ALONG QUITE WELL WITH THE AMERICAN INTERPRETER
A LOW-RANKING OFFICIAL LIKE ME?
YOU'RE ASKING THE IMPOSSIBLE OF ME
...AND HE TO THE AMBASSADOR THEN HE'LL TALK WITH THE COUNCIL OF ELDERS AND...
YOU SPEAK TO THE INTERPRETER ABOUT IT...
YOU ARE THE ONLY ONE I CAN ASK FOR HELP...
BUT THAT'S IMPOSSIBLE


THE HEAD OF THE TEMPLE, MASTER KOKAI, IS ALSO MOST DISTRESSED ..

WE NEED YOU, MR. IBUYA!!
I'M BEGGING YOU, PLEASE


WHAT DO YOU SAY, EH? IF YOU ACCEPT, I WON'T HAVE ANY OBJECTION TO ENTRUSTING YOU WITH MY DAUGHTER'S HAND ..
UMMM.
ARE YOU GOING TO USE YOUR DAUGHTER ...
...AS A TOOL FOR NEGOTIATING?!
NO, NO, THAT HAS NOTHING TO DO WITH IT...
BU... BUT MR. ABBOT!
B...

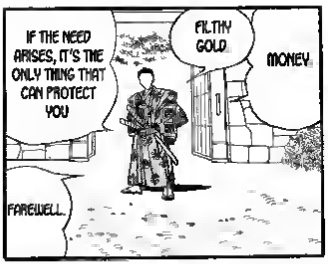
I WOULDN'T WANT TO BRING UP THE MATTER OF MISS O-SEKI IN SUCH CIRCUMSTANCES.
I'M SORRY.
WAIT, I DIDN'T MEAN THAT.
DON'T MISUNDERSTAND ME. I'VE ALWAYS WANTED A MAN LIKE YOURSELF TO BE MY DAUGHTER'S HUSBAND ..
UNDER THOSE CONDITIONS, I HAVE NO CHOICE BUT TO REFUSE!
SFX SLIIIDE


BUT, WHAT HAPPENED?
I'M SORRY... I'M TRULY SORRY!
.....

HOW COULD I ACCEPT IF THEY ASK ME LIKE THAT?!
麻布山善福寺
SHIT .. I'M SERIOUSLY A NUMSKULL.
AAARRGH! THAT PUT A DAMPER ON ME ASKING FOR HIS DAUGHTER'S HAND.
NOW MY ONLY OPTION IS TO RUN OFF WITH HER, OR SOMETHING LIKE THAT!
HAD YOU FORGOTTEN ABOUT ME?
WHY IT'S BUYA.

EACH TIME I SEE YOU, YOU'Y ALWAYS GOT THE SAME GRIMACE..
QUITE THE LONG FACE YOU'VE GOT THERE.
I'M KATSU, FROM THE SCHOOL OF THE NAVY
AH .. YOU'RE THE GUY FROM THAT TIME..
THERE'S TALK OF PUTTING HARRIS IN A TEMPLE, RIGHT?
HMMM, THEN..
IT SEEMS THEY'VE STIRRED UP QUITE A MESS SINCE HOTTA RETURNED
I WONDER WHO DECIDED THAT?
WELL THE COUNCIL OF ELDERS, OBVIOUSLY NOWA-DAYS, EACH OF THEM GOES THEIR OWN WAY
WHAT? LORD HOTTA'S ALREADY RETURNED FROM KYOTO?
HE RETURNED THE NIGHT BEFORE LAST .. THEY HELD A LARGE COMMOTION IN THE MEETING OF THE ELDERS.
THEN, HAS NONE OF THIS REACHED YOUR EARS?
NOTHING AT ALL.
THEY'VE SUMMONED ME TO THE CASTLE FOR AN URGENT MATTER HOW ABOUT YOU TAG ALONG WITH ME TIL WE'RE THERE?

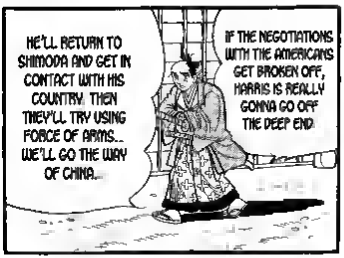
THE STRATEGY OF THE COURT DIDN'T GO WELL FOR HIM?
WELL, NO. HOWEVER MUCH HE ENTICED THEM WITH MONEY, HE DIDN'T MANAGE TO REMOVE THE XENOPHOBIC IDEAS FROM THE HEADS OF THE FOOLISH NOBLES.
WELL, I'M OFF.
HOW SHOULD I KNOW? I TOLD YOU THOSE IDIOTS DO AS THEY PLEASE.
THEN, WON'T THEY SIGN THE HARRIS TREATY?
YOU AND I ARE IN THE SAME BOAT AS HOTTA.
WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT?
DON'T GO GETTING YOURSELF WRAPPED UP IN ANY DISTURBANCE
BY THE WAY, IBUYA, BE VERY CAREFUL.
WHAT?!
THEN WHAT SHOULD I DO?
SULLY US?!
IF SOMETHING SHOULD HAPPEN TO HIM, IT WOULD UNDOUBTEDLY SULLY US TOO.


IF THE NEED ARISES, IT'S THE ONLY THING THAT CAN PROTECT YOU
FILTHY GOLD
MONEY
FAREWELL.

THE SAME...

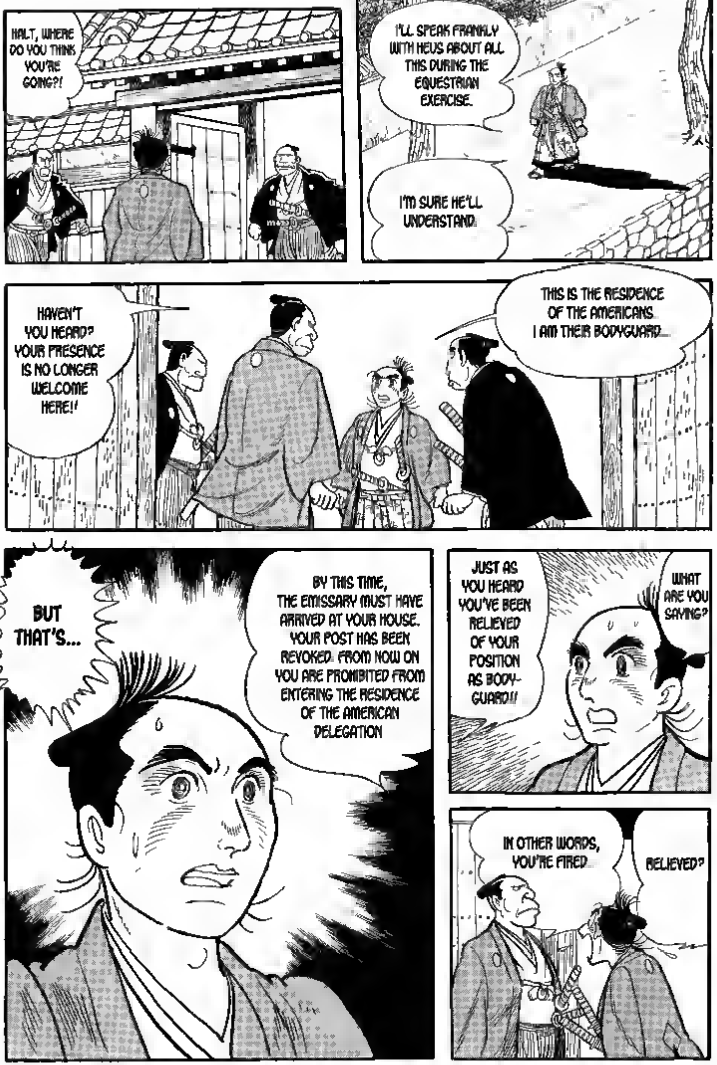
WHAT COULD BE HAPPENING IN THE CASTLE...?

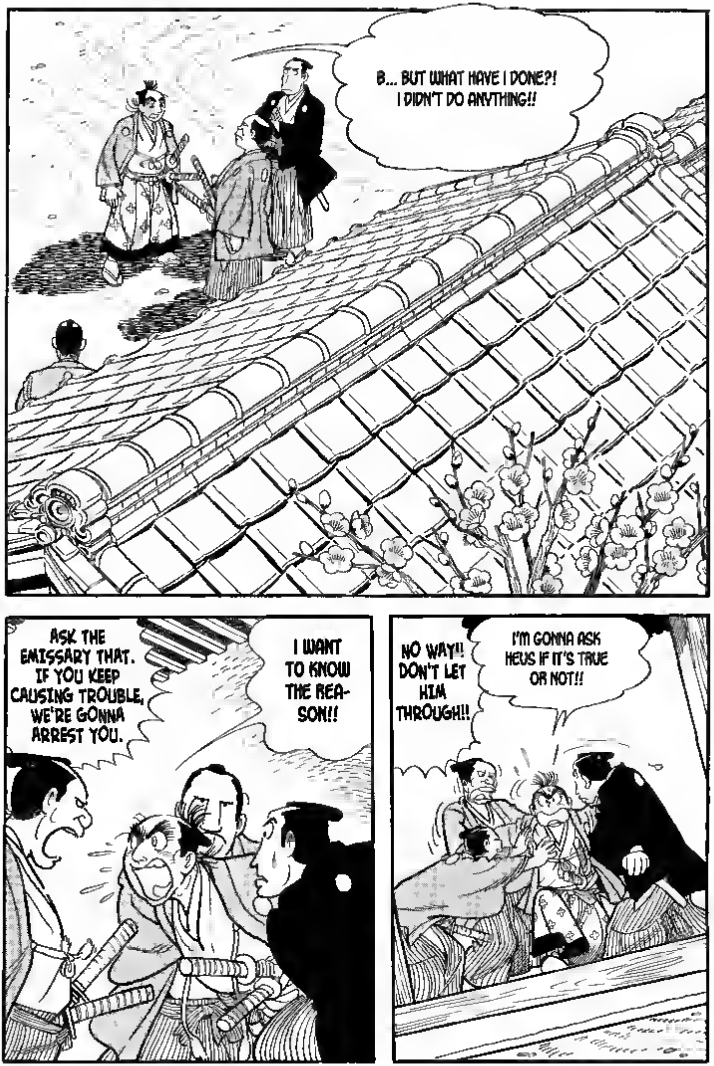
WITH THE CURRENT STRENGTH OF THE BAKUFU, WE CAN'T MEASURE UP TO AMERICA...
A WAR WILL BREAK OUT.


HE'LL RETURN TO SHIMODA AND GET IN CONTACT WITH HIS COUNTRY. THEN THEY'LL TRY USING FORCE OF ARMS... WE'LL GO THE WAY OF CHINA...
IF THE NEGOTIATIONS WITH THE AMERICANS GET BROKEN OFF, HARRIS IS REALLY GONNA GO OFF THE DEEP END.

THE CASTLE DAIMYO ARE ALL A BUNCH OF ROTTEN COWARDS.
I'VE GOT IT!!
I'M CLOSE TO THE AMERICAN DELEGATION.
I GET ALONG VERY WELL WITH HEUS. HE TRUSTS IN ME.
HOLD IT RIGHT THERE.
WHAT THE MONK SAID...
AND WE, THE SAMURAI OF LOW RANK, CAN'T DO ANYTHING NO MATTER HOW MUCH WE WORRY ABOUT THE NATION.
YOU'RE TALKING TO YOURSELF.
WHAT A GREAT IDEA!
I'LL GATHER AS MUCH INFORMATION AS POSSIBLE THROUGH HEUS. ON TOP OF THAT, I'LL PASS ON MY OPINION TO HARRIS THROUGH HIM. THAT'S WHAT I CAN DO.

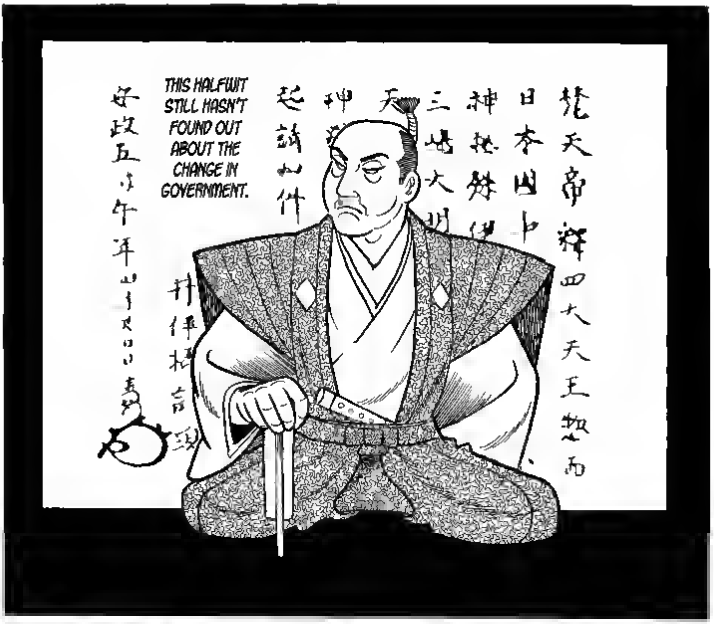
I'LL DO IT!
I FEEL AS IF A SIMPLE SAMURAI LIKE ME HAS THE POWER TO MOVE THE WORLD.
BUT MOTHER, I CAN'T STAY IMPASSIVE BEFORE THE POLITICAL CORRUPTION. THAT'S WHY I WANT TO MAKE MYSELF HEARD IN MY WAY!
BESIDES, THEY'VE ALREADY RAISED YOUR SALARY ONCE. DON'T DO THE IMPOSSIBLE.
I DON'T KNOW WHAT YOU'RE TALKING ABOUT, MANJIRO, BUT FOR ME WHAT WE HAVE NOW IS MORE THAN SUFFICIENT.
IT'S JUST LIKE THE LATE MASTER TOKO FUJITA SAID, THE BAKUFU IS LIKE A TREE...
...ON THE VERGE OF FALLING OVER.
NOT AT ALL!
THEY WON'T LET YOU... THAT'S TAKING ON THE SHOGUNATE.
WHAT I WANT IS TO SERVE AS ITS SUPPORT! EVEN IF MY STRENGTH IS MINIMAL...

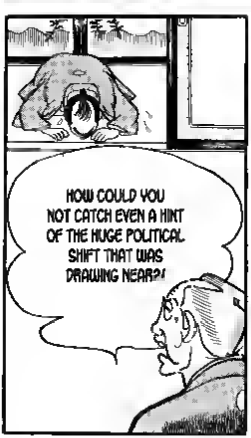

HALT, WHERE DO YOU THINK YOU'RE GOING?!
I'LL SPEAK FRANKLY WITH HEUS ABOUT ALL THIS DURING THE EQUESTRIAN EXERCISE.
I'M SURE HE'LL UNDERSTAND.
HAVEN'T YOU HEARD? YOUR PRESENCE IS NO LONGER WELCOME HERE!
THIS IS THE RESIDENCE OF THE AMERICANS. I AM THEIR BODYGUARD.
BUT THAT'S...
BY THIS TIME, THE EMISSARY MUST HAVE ARRIVED AT YOUR HOUSE. YOUR POST HAS BEEN REVOKED. FROM NOW ON YOU ARE PROHIBITED FROM ENTERING THE RESIDENCE OF THE AMERICAN DELEGATION
JUST AS YOU HEARD YOU'VE BEEN RELIEVED OF YOUR POSITION AS BODY-GUARD!!
WHAT ARE YOU SAYING?
IN OTHER WORDS, YOU'RE FIRED.
RELIEVED?

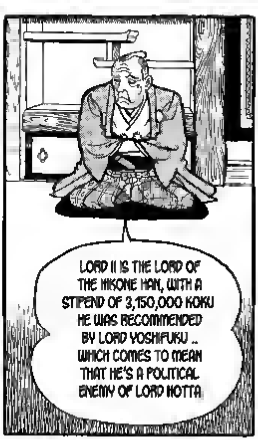

B... BUT WHAT HAVE I DONE?! I DIDN'T DO ANYTHING!!
I WANT TO KNOW THE REA-SON!!
ASK THE EMISSARY THAT. IF YOU KEEP CAUSING TROUBLE, WE'RE GONNA ARREST YOU.
I'M GONNA ASK HEUS IF IT'S TRUE OR NOT!!
NO WAY!! DON'T LET HIM THROUGH!!

A MESSENGER CAME FROM THE HAN, MANJIRO
YOU HAVE TO PRESENT YOURSELF IN THE MANSION OF THE HAN ...
ARE YOU SERIOUS, MOTHER..?
WHAT DO THEY MEAN FIRE?!
IT MUST BE A MISTAKE.
THEY'VE SENT AN EMISSARY TO MY HOME?
FIDDLESTICKS.
HA, HA, HA, HA, HA!

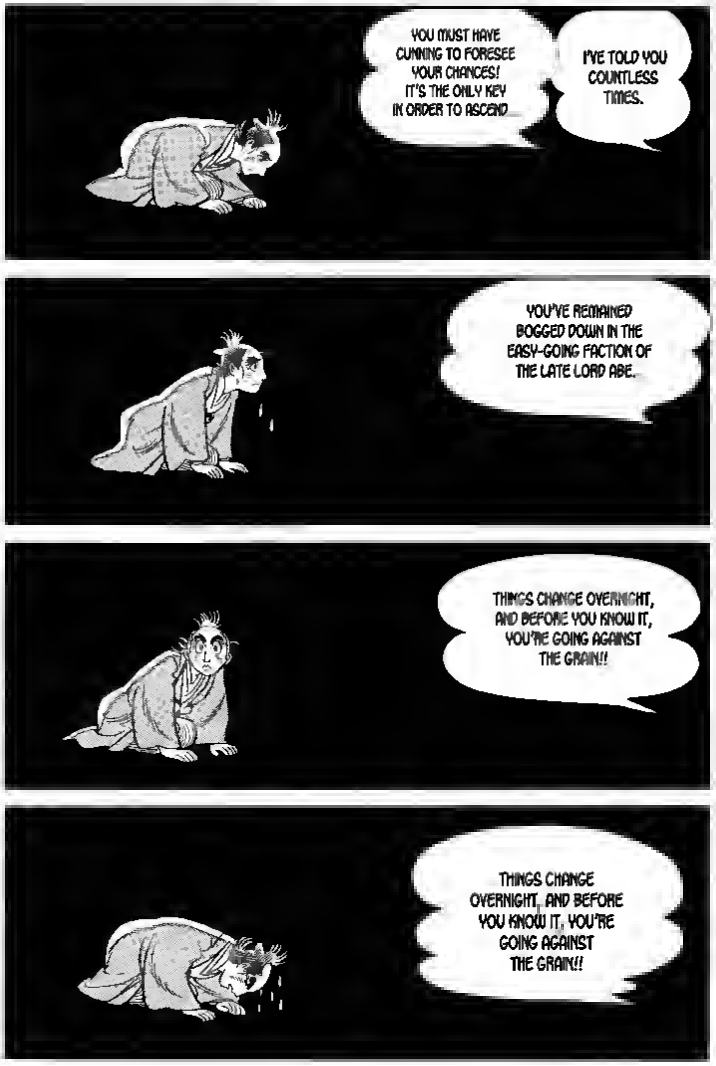
TN: *TAIRO - A HEREDITARY POSITION HELD BY THE II FAMILY. BUT ONLY FILLED ON RARE OCCASIONS DURING THE SHOGUNATE. THE TAIRO PRESIDED OVER THE COUNCIL OF ELDERS (TAIRO MEANS "GREAT ELDER"), AND WAS IN PRACTICE THE SECOND MOST POWERFUL POSITION BEHIND THE SHOGUN

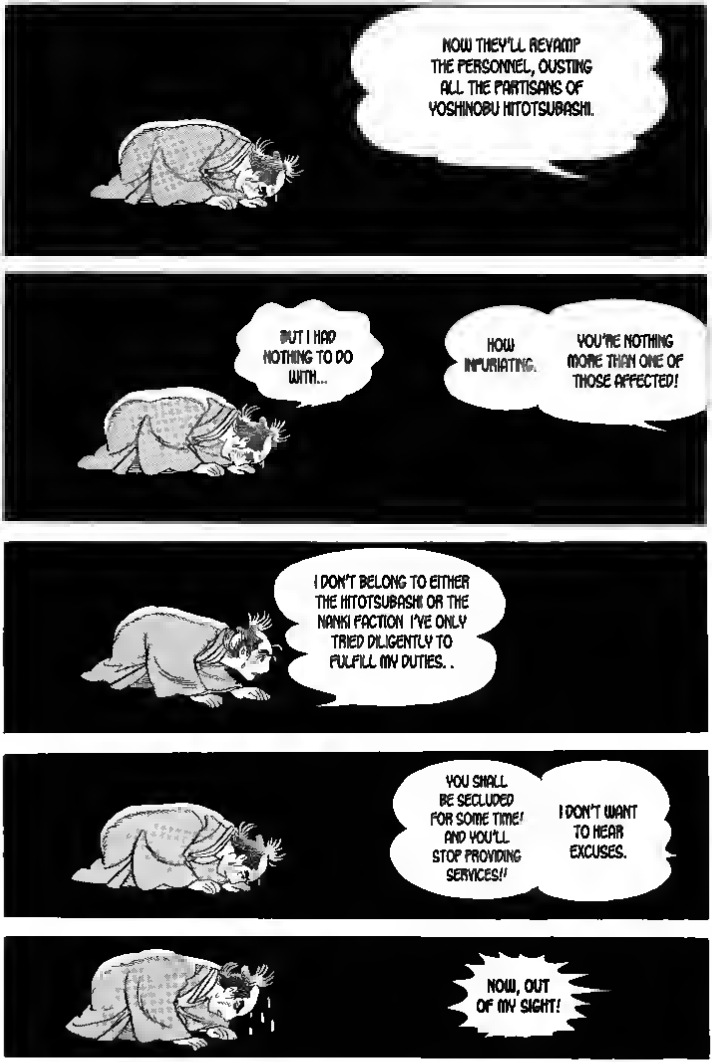

THIS HALFWIT STILL HASN'T FOUND OUT ABOUT THE CHANGE IN GOVERNMENT.


HOW COULD YOU NOT CATCH EVEN A HINT OF THE HUGE POLITICAL SHIFT THAT WAS DRAWING NEAR?!

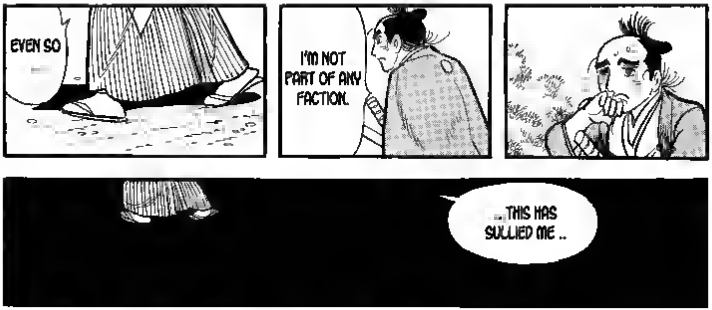

LORD II IS THE LORD OF THE HIKONE HAN, WITH A STIPEND OF 3,150,000 KOKU HE WAS RECOMMENDED BY LORD YOSHIFUKU ... WHICH COMES TO MEAN THAT HE'S A POLITICAL ENEMY OF LORD HOTTA

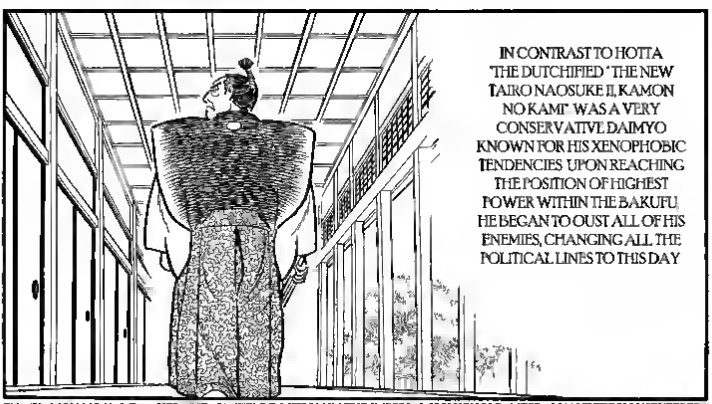
I... I HADN'T HEARD ANYTHING


YOU MUST HAVE CUNNING TO FORESEE YOUR CHANCES! IT'S THE ONLY KEY IN ORDER TO ASCEND.
I'VE TOLD YOU COUNTLESS TIMES.
YOU'VE REMAINED BOGGED DOWN IN THE EASY-GOING FACTION OF THE LATE LORD ABE.
THINGS CHANGE OVERNIGHT, AND BEFORE YOU KNOW IT, YOU'RE GOING AGAINST THE GRAIN!!
THINGS CHANGE OVERNIGHT, AND BEFORE YOU KNOW IT, YOU'RE GOING AGAINST THE GRAIN!!


NOW THEY'LL REVAMP THE PERSONNEL, OUSTING ALL THE PARTISANS OF YOSHINOBU HITOTSUBASHI.
BUT I HAD NOTHING TO DO WITH...
HOW INFURIATING.
YOU'RE NOTHING MORE THAN ONE OF THOSE AFFECTED!
I DON'T BELONG TO EITHER THE HITOTSUBASHI OR THE NANKI FACTION I'VE ONLY TRIED DILIGENTLY TO FULFILL MY DUTIES. .
YOU SHALL BE SECLUDED FOR SOME TIME! AND YOU'LL STOP PROVIDING SERVICES!!
I DON'T WANT TO HEAR EXCUSES.
NOW, OUT OF MY SIGHT!

IF THE MOTHER TURTLE SLIPS...
...HER BABY TURTLES FALL TOO.
SFX. WHUMP
SHIT!





TN: "KAMON NO KAMI" - A HEREDITARY TITLE/POSITION IN THE IMPERIAL HOUSEHOLD. LITERALLY "CHIEF HOUSEKEEPER."

ALL THE PEOPLE ARE CHEERING AS IF YOU HAD ATTAINED ABSOLUTE GLORY.
ARE THEY REJOICING BACK HOME?
GLORY... HA, HA ..
NO, THE RESISTANCE OF THE HITO-TSUBASHI SUPPORTERS IS STILL STRONG.
YES, MY LORD, IT'S SOME-THING CLOSE AT HAND
ONCE YOSHIFUKU HAS BEEN NAMED SUCCESSOR, THEN I WILL HAVE IT IN MY HANDS.
WELL DONE, SHUZEN, YO MAY RETURN TO KYOTO.

WE'LL PAY THEM OFF NICELY WITH MONEY AND PUT AN END TO THE HITOTSUBASHI FACTION
SPEAK WITH THE VASSAL OF KUJO, SAKON SHIMA, AND WIN OVER THE NOBLES.
APPROACH.
YES, MY LORD.
THAT IS WITHIN 7 DAYS, DO YOU THINK THAT'S ENOUGH TIME FOR HIS EXCELLENCY TO MAKE A DECISION?
I WANT HIS EXCELLENCY TO CHOOSE YOSHIFUKU AS HIS SUCCESSOR ON THE FIRST OF MAY, AND TO ANNOUNCE IT AS SUCH TO THE COUNCIL OF ELDERS.
I'M SURE OF IT. LEAVE THAT TO MY ACCOUNT.

WOMEN ARE SIMPLE LIKE THAT. THEY SUPPORT THEIR DARLING CHILDREN BEFORE ANYTHING ELSE
IT SEEMS THAT THE BELOVED WIFE OF HIS EXCELLENCY IS LEANING TOWARD YOSHIFUKU
THE DAIMYO FOR HITOTSUBASHI WON'T EVEN BE ABLE TO SAY "MU."
THAT CARP... THE GOLD-COLORED ONE. LET'S MAKE IT A GIFT TO THE BELOVED WIFE
MY SPRING HAS BEGUN. VERY SOON MY FLOWERS SHALL OPEN, HO, HO, HO, HO...
UNDERSTOOD, MY LORD. I'LL TAKE CARE OF PREPARING IT IMMEDIATELY... NOW, IF YOU'LL EXCUSE ME...
SURE.